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| APPLICATION NO.   | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|---|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/590,188  | 01/29/2007  | Kouroush Nasheri     | SAU1.PAU.01.US      | 3520             |
| 23386   | 7590        | 06/04/2010           | EXAMINER            |                  |
| Myers Andras Sherman LLP<br>19900 MacArthur Blvd.<br>Suite 1150<br>Irvine, CA 92612 |             |                      | TUROC, DAVID P      |                  |
|   |             |                      | ART UNIT            | PAPER NUMBER     |
|   |             |                      | 1715                |                  |
|   |             |                      | MAIL DATE           | DELIVERY MODE    |
|   |             |                      | 06/04/2010          | PAPER            |

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

|                              |                                      |                                       |  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Office Action Summary</b> | <b>Application No.</b><br>10/590,188 | <b>Applicant(s)</b><br>NASHERI ET AL. |  |
|                              | <b>Examiner</b><br>DAVID TUROCY      | <b>Art Unit</b><br>1715               |  |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 May 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-27 and 29-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-27 and 29-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                       |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>6/2/2010</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 5/28/2010 has been entered.

### ***Response to Amendment***

2. Applicant's amendments, filed 5/28/2010, have been fully considered and reviewed by the examiner. The examiner notes the amendment to the claims to require "entire" solution is liquid. The examiner notes the amendment to the specification and therefore the objection to such has been withdrawn. Claims 1, 3-27, 29-33 are pending in the instant application.

### ***Response to Arguments***

3. Applicant's arguments filed 5/28/2010 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The applicant has argued that the claimed invention is a remarkable improvement because it requires significantly less steps and less acetylation reaction time. Initially, the examiner notes that the claims include comprising language and

Art Unit: 1715

therefore the present claims do not exclude additional steps and therefore the mere presence of more steps in the prior art does not effectively negate the rejection of record. As for the acetylating reaction time, this argument is not commensurate in scope with the claims because the independent claims fail to require the reaction time. Additionally, this argument does not specifically address the rejection of record, where EP 810 discloses a few minutes of impregnation (page 3, lines 20-24).

As for the general yield of up to 28% versus the prior art of up to 24%, this is clearly not commensurate in scope with the claims because the claims are broadly drafted. Additionally, the prior art discloses a range that reads on the argued range, i.e. 24% yield is within the range of less than 28% yield. Additionally, the mere disclosure of a single example of having 24% yield does not limit the teaching of the reference to only up to 24% as argued by the applicant.

The applicant has argued that the EP 810 reference fails to disclose the entire working solution is required to be specifically preheated to a temperate of 150°C and subject to elevate pressure to remain in liquid phase. The EP 810 reference explicitly state applying a liquid solution to the wood

As for the requirement of temperature, the applicant argues that the range of 30-150 is significantly outside of 150-250. The prior art explicitly discloses 150 as a temperature and this is within the range as claimed and thus it is unclear how this is significantly outside of range as claimed. Additionally, at the very least, a *prima facie* case of obviousness exists where the claimed ranges and prior art do not overlap but are close enough that one in ordinary skill in the art would have expected them to have

Art Unit: 1715

the same properties. *Titanium Metals Corp. of America v. Banner*, 778 f.2d 775, 227 USPQ 773 (Fed. Cir. 1985). See MPEP 2144.05.

EP 810 explicitly discloses preheating the solution to 150°C and applying the liquid phase solution to the wood, as discussed in the prior rejection. As for maintaining a pressure throughout the preheating step to ensure the working solution is maintained in a liquid phase, this is explicitly inherent in the teaching of EP 810 that the solution is a liquid solution warmed and applied. Additionally, the examiner notes the claims fail to require the all acetylating agent to remain in liquid form and therefore since the prior art discloses a 150° super heated liquid, it is the examiners position that the pressure is maintained so as to ensure a working solution is liquid. Additionally, if any vapor phase exist, this vapor phase would not be considered a working solution in liquid form. Since the claims include comprising language, i.e. other process steps or other process parameters not specifically listed, the claims are open to a portion of the agent being in the vapor phase because there exists an entire working solution in the liquid phase.

The applicant has argued that the prior art fails to acknowledge that there needs to be sufficient pressure applied to maintain the entire solution in liquid form. The applicant argues the pressure applied eliminates the boiled off vapors. However, the examiner notes the EP 810 reference explicitly discloses application of a liquid solution, not a gaseous material, and the examiner maintains that the relationship between temperature and pressure are known result effective variables and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply pressure during the

Art Unit: 1715

preheating step to maintain the solution in liquid state because one would reasonable expect predictable results in the modification and one would be motivated to provide a liquid medium to reap the benefit of reducing the boiling of the material and the loss of gaseous material, i.e. reduction of unused gas material. The examiner cites here "Boiling", which explicitly discloses the relationship between the liquid phase and the pressure and the known relationship between the pressure and boiling point. In other words, increasing the pressure will increase the boiling point to maintain the liquid phase and at the very least increasing the pressure to maintain a liquid phase, i.e. by increasing the boiling point, would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to reap the benefits of application of a liquid material.

The applicant continually argues that the liquid phase at the disclosed temperature provides certain advantages, but fails to discuss the EP 810 reference disclosure of 150°C being within the range as claimed and the correlation between the disclosure that the working solution is applied as a liquid, not a gas.

The applicants arguments against the examiners position regarding claims 21-22 are not persuasive because the prior art vessels can broadly be considered "pressure vessels" as discussed in the prior office action. At the very least the use of pressure vessels would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

As for the separate heating vessel, the prior art discloses heating device and this is sufficient to read on the claim as written (i.e. a heating device to heat the pipe would results in the pipe being considered a warming vessel). It appears as though the applicant is narrowly reading the claim limitations.

As for the arguments against US 407, the applicant argues that the use of nitrogen gas already at the impregnation stage and argues that there is no mention of applying prepressure to the wood prior to impregnation with N<sub>2</sub> gas. However, US 407 explicitly discloses an overpressure using N<sub>2</sub> generated first, prior to supplying water to the chamber, i.e. to create the pressure within the chamber (Column 3, lines 30-31).

As for the arguments with regards to US 998, the examiner notes that these arguments are not commensurate in scope with the claims as drafted and therefore are deemed moot. The EP 810 reference discloses providing a prepressure within the chamber and US 998 discloses a known and suitable technique for providing this pressure includes supplying air into the chamber.

Applicant's arguments with regard to US 582 are persuasive and therefore this rejection has been withdrawn. The examiner cites US 3720661 as a teaching of acetylating treatment with liquid at 150-220°C.

All other applicant's arguments that are not specifically addressed above are either 1) not commensurate in scope with the claims or 2) unsupported by any factual evidence and therefore these arguments are deemed moot.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

4. Claims 1, 3-27, 39-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application

Art Unit: 1715

was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The requirement of “entire” solution remaining in the liquid phase is not supported explicitly by the specification and the examiner after a cursory review of the specification can not locate implicit support for this limiting requirement. If the applicant can provide adequate support for the claim amendment the examiner will withdraw this rejection.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1, 3, 6-8, 11-24, 31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being EP 0680810 A1, hereafter EP 810 in view of admitted state in the art (ASA) and "Boiling".

EP 810 is applied here as applied in the prior rejection dated 2/4/2010 in combination with the remarks of section 3 above, each of which is incorporated herein by reference. The examiner cites here “Boiling” to support the obviousness.

The examiner notes the EP 810 reference explicitly discloses application of a liquid solution, not a gaseous material, and the examiner maintains that the relationship between temperature and pressure are known result effective variables and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply pressure during the preheating step to maintain the solution in liquid state because one would reasonable expect predictable results in the modification and one would be motivated to provide a



Art Unit: 1715

liquid medium to reap the benefit of reducing the boiling of the material and the loss of gaseous material, i.e. reduction of unused gas material. The examiner cites here ASA which discloses the known boiling point of the acetic anhydride being less than the heated temperature as taught by EP 810 and "Boiling", which explicitly discloses the known relationship between the liquid phase and the pressure and the known relationship between the pressure and boiling point. In other words, increasing the pressure will increase the boiling point to maintain the liquid phase and at the very least increasing the pressure to maintain a liquid phase, i.e. by increasing the boiling point, would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to reap the benefits of application of a liquid material.

7. Claim 4-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 810 in view of ASA and "Boiling" and further in view of US Patent 5679407 hereinafter US 407 or US Patent 4466998 hereinafter US 998.

EP 810 in view of "Boiling" discloses all that is taught above, including applying a pre-pressure to the chamber; however, the reference fails to disclose using a gas as claimed. However, US 407 discloses applying a pre-pressure to a wood prior to impregnation using N<sub>2</sub> gas and US 998 discloses providing pre-pressure using air. Therefore it would have been obvious to have modified in view of ASA and "Boiling" to have used N<sub>2</sub> or air gas to provide the pre-pressure because such is taught as known and suitable techniques in wood impregnation art to provide preliminary pressure prior to impregnation.

Art Unit: 1715

Claim 5: this claim is rejected for the reasons as set forth above.

8. Claims 25-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 810 in view of ASA and "Boiling" and further in view of US Patent 3720661, hereinafter US 661.

Claims 25-26: EP 810 in view of ASA and "Boiling" discloses all that is discussed above, and while the examiner maintains the position as above, the examiner cites US 661 which discloses applying a heated liquid solution of 150-220 to the wood in an acetylating process and therefore modification EP 810 in view of ASA and "Boiling" to use the solution temperature as taught in the US 661 with a reasonable expectation of predictable results.

9. Claims 27, 29-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 810 in view of ASA and "Boiling" and further in view of US Patent 6376582, hereinafter US 582.

Claims 27, 29-30: EP 810 in view of ASA and "Boiling" discloses applying acetic anhydride solution to the wood, but fails to disclose a solvent of xylene, however, US 582 discloses the advantages of using xylene as a solvent for acetic anhydride include providing the reaction to proceed under more moderate conditions rather than the traditional exothermic conditions which will result in wood degradation. Therefore taking the references collectively, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art

Art Unit: 1715

at the time of the invention to have modified EP 810 in view of ASA and "Boiling" to use xylene to achieve the benefit of reduction of wood degradation.

### ***Conclusion***

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DAVID TUROCY whose telephone number is (571)272-2940. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 7 a.m. - 6 p.m., Monday and Wednesday 5-8 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Timothy Meeks can be reached on (571) 272-1423. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/David Turocy/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1792

Application/Control Number: 10/590,188  
Art Unit: 1715

Page 11